BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr.

"You know, you get a culture aspect. At least get your identity back in your Hawaiian culture. But you got to make ends meet. So that's the hard part. 'Cause, you know, we never live that style. We trying to bring 'em back, but a fish pond is not only the ocean. You got to work with the land around that fish pond. You got to bring back the pūnāwai*s and the taro patches. So I found out that, you know, I work in here, but it's the whole thing that going to make this successful. So it's pretty interesting. Pretty much of a challenge. You never get bored. You get frustrated but never bored."*

William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr. was born January 5, 1967 and raised in Manawai, Moloka'i. He is the son of William "Billy" Kalipi, Sr. and Pauline Kalipi. He grew up fishing the East End waters of Moloka'i and helping his father, manager of the Moloka'i Fishermen's Association.

Tubz attended Kilohana School, Lahainaluna School on Maui, McKinley and Farrington High Schools on O'ahu, and graduated from Moloka'i High School.

In 1990, he was selected by Hui o Kuapā to become the manager of 'Ualapu'e Fishpond. His major duties have been to restore the pond wall which was in disrepair through years of neglect, set up a work station, eradicate mangroves and other unwanted vegetation, rid the pond of predator fish, restore adjacent freshwater springs and taro patches, stock the pond with fingerlings, and devise harvesting and marketing schemes.

He lives in Ho'olehua with his wife, Barbara Hanchett Kalipi, unit manager of the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center on Moloka'i.

Tape No. 19-26-1-91

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr. (WK)

April 9, 1991

'Ualapu'e, Moloka'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr. on April 9, 1991, and we're at the 'Ualapu'e Fishpond in 'Ualapu'e, Moloka'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay. Let's start. Tell me, first of all, Tubz, when and where you were born?

WK: I was born in O'ahu, Kapi'olani Hospital, 1967, January 5. My folks originally [were] from here [Moloka'i]. So we moved back—my folks moved back after my dad's mom passed away. Then I was raised up Manawai, just right before 'Ōhi'a coming to town.

WN: Your father and mother were from here and then they moved to O'ahu?

WK: Right. My dad was from Manawai, and my mom's from Hālawa originally. (They were both born in Honolulu but raised on Moloka'i.)

WN: What were they doing in Honolulu?

WK: My dad was working construction. He was a mason. He went down there for school, then he was working [as a] mason. Then when his mom passed away, he came back 'cause they got a lot of properties at Manawai.

WN: How old were you when you folks came back?

WK: One (chuckles).

WN: Oh. So you don't remember O'ahu at all then?

WK: No. I thought I was born and raised here.

WN: (Chuckles) When did you find out you weren't?

WK: When I was about fourth or fifth grade. When I was growing up, my dad [William "Billy" Kalipi, Sr.] was in charge of Lokahi Pacific. Was one fisheries *hui* association or something like that. And so my childhood was stacking fish, shipping 'em out. You know, helping my

dad. The whole family did that. They hired him, but we all worked. We stacked the fish for him. We brine 'em. We send 'em out. Then every now and then we go out with local fishermen for go help them out, bullpen nets. To close the pen or. . . . So since he was in the fishing industry, our contribution was go help the fishermen or even help him [father] get more fish by us guys go help the fishermen, or we go help him by packing and stacking, and sending the fish out.

WN: This was a Moloka'i company?

WK: No, this is Lokahi Pacific.

WN: Which was based where?

WK: The home base was Maui, I think. I'm not too sure. But you know, they had something like $1 million for ten years, but only earmark $100,000 come down a year. So, you know, they do training, like deep-sea fishing, how to scuba dive, how to, you know, when you get bite from one eel or attack from one shark, all the different kind stuffs. So they gave a lot of technical training, which we went just for listen. I was too young.

WN: Your father was a fisherman or he worked mostly in the . . .

WK: He was a fisherman, but he came one wholesaler. So we learned the wholesaling and then helping him out by helping like Moses Kalilikane when he bullpen and he no more enough crew. We go help him out. You know, closing the pen down. 'Cause bullpen, you need at least two boats.

WN: What is bullpen net, if you can explain to me.

WK: Bullpen net is one type of fishing; you don't gill a fish. You use a hard purse or a hard *aho* net. You get two wings and the middle line, and then you get a pen in the middle. The fish usually doesn't swim in. So when a fish traveling, it's going to hit the net if it's going left or it's going right. And then it's going to go out to the pen. The pen is a circle. And it [fish] just stays in the pen. It doesn't gill 'em. So the next day, we come and we just close the pen and see what's in there. If we got a shark, we take 'em out. If get a turtle, we take that out.

And then that's good in one way and that's not good in another way. One way, sometimes it rapes the ocean, rapes our reef. Another way, it's good because you can be real picky. Like at that time, if you had the market for *ulua* and you had plenty *ulua,* you can just keep the *ulua.* If you had a market for *enenue* or *pāpio* or *kūmū,* you just can keep that specific fish. So that was good. But some fishermen, they take the whole thing and try get rid of 'em. And that's going to rape the ocean. You know, if you get a market for 'em, you try take 'em. If you no more, you let 'em go.

WN: So you got to go to certain areas that had—if you in the market for *ulua,* you got to go to a place where the *ulua*'s running?

WK: Not really. 'Cause you no can predict what you going catch. So you just going drop your pen and check 'em the next morning and see what you got. And then if you got certain plenty fish

or the day before you try prep yourself by saying, you know, I might get so and so, so which one is the best money? And you just want to break even first for your boat and your nets. Then after, you want to make money. Your nets is like 20,000 bucks [$20,000] right there. So you want to try at least bring income, maybe $1,000 a month for twenty months you can get your nets paid off. And then your boat another one. You just want to cover all expenses, like your gas. And then, bullpen, you usually got to get three workers minimum. Like we was all volunteers.

WN: So three workers per boat?

WK: Three workers per pen. You can get two boats, two guys on one boat, and one guy on the other boat.

WN: But as long as you got three to work the pen?

WK: Yeah. And more guys, more faster. 'Cause you just going close your pen, the other boat going pick up the nets. The other gang going close the pen more smaller and smaller, and then hook 'em. Lift 'em up with one bag.

WN: So your father was, what, salaried by Lokahi?

WK: Yeah.

WN: What about you guys? You guys got paid as kids?

WK: No. (WN laughs.) Did 'em all for love. But was good fun. You know, learn all the different kind fish. All the deep-sea fish. All the different reef fish. And then, since we go out with all the fishermen, we learn the different techniques and see where the fish traveling. So that was a good learning experience for me.

WN: Where did the fish go? I mean, where was the market for fish?

WK: Well, you get different species for different places. Lokahi tried to deal with Safeway and all the big stores, but they didn't want volume and they was real picky. They no like *kala,* they no like *palani,* and they like only red fish and maybe 100 pounds or fifty pounds.

WN: You mean, *'ahi,* like that?

WK: No, I would say *kūmū* . . .

WN: Oh, I see. Red fish.

WK: Because majority was all reef fishermen. And fishermen, you no can. It's hard. So you have to---what you get is what you want to sell. So you had to sell 'em like fifteen cents a pound on the *kala.* On the *palani,* it's little bit cheaper or just as much.

WN: So this is mostly O'ahu, then?

WK: Right. O'ahu, Maui . . .

WN: Who bought in volume in those days? The early days?

WK: I wouldn't know. I was just more of a packing and going out with the crew.

WN: So you was packing 'em fresh?

WK: Right.

WN: Wasn't frozen or anything?

WK: No. When they bring 'em in, they usually brine already. So we just stack 'em and then send 'em out. I don't know where we send 'em. My dad probably know who's the wholesalers.

WN: I can ask him. So that was how you learned the commercial fishing business? Going out with these guys.

WK: Yeah. Was pretty good fun.

WN: So how long did you do this?

WK: About maybe seven years. About seven years. Then my dad quit that place [Lokahi Pacific]. And then we was just fishing on our own.

WN: Commercially?

WK: Yeah. Or just for make ends meet. I no can say commercially. Yeah, sort of commercially, 'cause we used to go to the chicken fights and every time sell over there, every Sunday. The chicken fights—that's the most money. The Filipinos all over there.

WN: What kind fish they mostly bought?

WK: They buy mullet, they buy everything and anything. They make soup on the *ulua* head, they make *kala* soup, they make mullet soup. They like *awa.* They like *awa 'aua.* They like anything. And that's where the crowd stay and the money stay over there, too. Everybody gambling.

WN: So what, you guys ice the fish and just bring 'em on the truck?

WK: Yeah. Then we peddle some. We peddle majority of 'em, actually. We go different place for fish. During *tako* season, we just stock up on our *tako,* and dry 'em, and sell 'em to Tamashiro [Market]. Back then was, I don't know, seven dollars a pound. That was plenty money. (Chuckles) Now, it's about fifteen dollars a pound.

WN: Yeah? Double then.

WK: Every winter we used to catch one truckload *kala.* Every Christmas. And then just go right

down the houses and give 'em to anybody and everybody. Now, it's hard for catch five coolers *kala.*

WN: So Filipinos were good customers. Who else? Hawaiians, Japanese, around here?

WK: Hawaiians, we usually just give 'em.

WN: Yeah, that's true, yeah.

WK: My dad, he don't want to sell to Hawaiians. Like Aunty Lani [Kapuni] them all over here. He used to tell me to give them certain-certain fish. Then we go down to town [i.e., Kaunakakai] or we go down to Kualapu'u and we go sell 'em over there. Maunaloa, when the chicken fight move up there. Hawaiians, they'd probably buy 'em, but we hardly sold to them.

WN: So mostly Filipinos, Japanese.

WK: Yeah. Filipinos, Japanese, and if Hawaiians go chicken fight, they buy 'em, they buy 'em.

WN: What about *Haole?* They bought?

WK: I don't know. I don't think had that much *Haole*s there.

WN: Like the ranch or plantation managers or anything like that?

WK: No, never had that much. I don't recall had that much *Haole*s then.

WN: So while you was going school, you were doing this? Family . . .

WK: I hardly went school (chuckles). I hardly went school till I was ninth grade. I was going . . .

WN: You mean, you was enrolled in school but you never go school (chuckles)?

WK: Yeah. Maybe like thirty days out of the whole year. I wanted to go school. I hated fishing then.

WN: Oh, yeah?

WK: 'Cause it was one job. And I hated 'em with a passion.

WN: You had brothers and sisters?

WK: Yeah.

WN: And they all did the same thing?

WK: No. They went school. So I was bum out. I was the oldest. I had a older sister, but she went Kamehameha School. So when I was eighth grade, I applied for Lahaina and I got in the ninth grade. I was pretty happy.

WN: Oh, so you went Lahainaluna [School] ninth grade?

WK: Yeah.

WN: Oh, and what, you dormed?

WK: Yeah. That's the only way I think I could get out of fishing. But when I *wen* hit ninth grade, my dad got the job as recreation assistant for [Maui] County. So was a nice time. He didn't need nobody's help 'cause he wasn't fishing no more. So I could go Lahaina[luna].

WN: So you went ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth?

WK: No, I just went ninth grade. I came back here. [Then] I went to McKinley [High School] on O'ahu. I started McKinley in my tenth grade year.

WN: Oh, yeah? How come McKinley?

WK: I was just hopping all the schools. And then I came back here second semester on the tenth grade. Then I went here eleventh grade.

WN: Moloka'i [High School]?

WK: Yeah. Then my senior year, I got in a fight with my volleyball coach, so I went Farrington [High School] (chuckles) for play volleyball over there. But I couldn't [play volleyball] because I need a one-year rest. Something like that.

WN: Yeah, you got to sit out one year [after transferring].

WK: Yeah. So, I had to come back [to Moloka'i]. Came back here and graduate. Then it was hard for me go college 'cause I never had one volleyball scholarship. I made all state, junior year. I know I would have made 'em senior year, too. So I had maybe like $4,000 scholarship, but wasn't enough for get me into one big school. Because I was trying to get into SMU [Southern Methodist University].

WN: SMU? In Dallas?

WK: Yeah, Texas.

WN: That's a long way from home.

WK: Yeah, but I couldn't look for the West Coast or even Hawai'i. The competition was too high. And I couldn't risk that. If I was going get anything, I had to get into one that volleyball is fairly new. And it was fairly new at that time at SMU. So I was going over there and play. And I knew I could have started. If you start, you probably can get one full scholarship. That didn't work out because, again, was too far. I wasn't ready for school.

So I joined the service. I went in the navy. I played volleyball for them two years. And then my last year, I didn't want to play, I wanted to travel. Actually, my first year, I went down

to Westpac. Then I played volleyball after that for the navy. Then my last year, I went on another Westpac but I didn't finish it. 'Cause I got out. I got discharged.

Then I came here and then I worked Kalaupapa for almost a year, a contract. When that contract was over, then I went commercial fishing. Was about winter months, so I was catching majority mullet.

WN: Where? Outside ocean or . . .

WK: Outside ocean. Me and my nephew. Then I bought a boat. Then I went to catch red fish during the winter months. Red fish is expensive during the winter months.

WN: What made you go back to commercial fishing after you said you hated it?

WK: That was always pretty much the bread and butter. You know, I know I could do that good. I know I can catch the fish. I had no alternative. Moloka'i is so small. I couldn't get another job. I was waiting for my next contract in April. But that's from October all the way into April. So I had to meet ends by going back fishing. I go throw net for *manini* for peddle 'em. Maybe 100 pounds, $100 right there.

WN: This is recently? Before you started over here [i.e., as 'Ualapu'e Fishpond manager]?

WK: Yeah. I go catch maybe three, four coolers mullet. The first one I caught maybe about six cooler mullet and I just gave 'em all away. Then after that, I start selling 'em, selling 'em. Then the *'ū'ū*, I was trying to sell 'em. I was selling the majority to Misakis. They wasn't giving me good price, so I said, "Ah, forget it." Then I worked on a shrimp farm. I was in charge of the hatchery. That was pretty routine. Pretty challenging 'cause it's a different environment. You know, before, I used to catch the fish. Now, they trying to tell me to raise 'em. So was a whole. . . . Wow.

WN: (Chuckles) That's a whole different thing, huh?

WK: Yeah. So, I was having training from Oceanic Institute. [Teach] me the different stages and what I got to feed 'em, what is the water temperature, and all that good stuff. So that was pretty interesting. That's when I realized that we raping our ocean. Before, used to have thousands. You know, we could go out there, maybe two, three hours, and come back with one boat full. Now, come back with maybe two, three coolers. (Chuckles)

WN: Is it because of overfishing or other factors?

WK: I would say overfishing. You know, before, never had boat ramps. So we only fish over here. We no go down Kaunakakai or we no go Pūko'o. We no go West End. But when the boat ramps came, other people can bring their boat over here and they can fish. Before, we no used to go fish in their place. You know, if our boat can go from here to there, this is going be our home ground. But we not going downtown. But when the boat ramp came, that's when had all the competition and the overfish and stuff.

WN: Outsiders coming in too?

WK: I wouldn't say outsiders. Yeah, outsiders is like [people from] Ho'olehua, Kaunakakai coming over here. Maunaloa.

WN: What about like from Honolulu? People would come . . .

WK: No. Only the *akule* boat. But no other fishermen. They wouldn't come over here and fish commercially. Before, used to catch forty, fifty squid a day per person. Now, I don't know, maybe this squid season never run that much, but we caught maybe forty, fifty the whole squid season. But I don't think *wen* run that much 'cause had too much rain. Maybe next year going be better. Then we always challenge who gets the most squid, who get the biggest fish. *Da kine* good fun kind.

WN: When you was kid, you remember this ['Ualapu'e] Fishpond?

WK: I remember this used to be the Kaauwais' fish pond. I was going school with Charlie Kaauwai, Jr., Paul, August, Ronald, Richard. So I knew all the Kaauwais. I never know too much about, you know, Harry Apo had this pond back in the '60s and the '50s or whatevers. All I knew is this was the Kaauwais' fish pond.

WN: So, was Kaauwai's after Apo?

WK: Ah, yeah.

WN: You did any fish pond fishing before?

WK: Oh, yeah. When my dad *wen* quit Lokahi [Pacific], we lived at Keawa Nui. He was in charge or he was the landlord for Diamond J Ranch. That's, you know, where the school stay right now. So we used to fish farm the Mikimiki Fishpond [a.k.a., Keawa Nui Fishpond]. Right in Keawa Nui *ahupua'a*. That pond right there.

WN: So you were working at the shrimp farm, then what happened after that?

WK: I was working at the shrimp farm, then this position [i.e., 'Ualapu'e Fishpond manager] opened, so I applied for it. If I got it, I got it. If I didn't, I didn't. But I had plenty experience with outdoor fishing and I had plenty knowledge now on the indoor fishing or aquaculture. So I thought that, you know, I would be the best applicant. And so happen I guess they thought the same thing 'cause I got hired. I started April 1.

WN: April 1, last year [1990]?

WK: Last year.

WN: Oh, so one year, then.

WK: This place was one wreck, so I came, maybe the first month, just for clear. We never even start [repairing] the wall in April.

WN: When you first started, what had to be done? What were the priorities that had to be done to

get started?

WK: When I first started, I tried to emphasize to the board [i.e., Board of Directors, Hui o Kuapā] that, to me, the first thing to be done is get a work station. You know, one centralized work station so we can go work from there. 'Cause now, we still don't got a work station. We got one work site, but there's no office. So, you know, we locking up all our tools and equipment. You know, can be stolen. So, to me, was all land clearing. This was all mangrove. All the way to the pond. And then, that flat area was covered with all *kiawe* trees. So I *wen* cut 'em all and poison them all, burn 'em all. Then haul some of 'em. I *wen* cut all this mangrove over here, so at least got one site so we can start working and prepping for one work station.

WN: How you guys chose this [western] side [of the fish pond] to be your site, as opposed to the other [eastern] side. In fact, what is on the other side over here?

WK: The other side [eastern side of 'Ualapu'e Fishpond] is all seven acres of marshland. So it was majority taro patches. This [western] side wasn't too much of a taro patch because had one shack [i.e., *hale mākāhā*] right there. Had one house right there. Had another house right there. So I guess, you know, the board chose this site. It's a pretty good site, too. The wind usually blow down here. You know, if you can get one shack down here, you no like the sewage go inside your pond. Even though it's going be nutritious for the fish.

WN: (Chuckles) So the wind blows east to west, usually?

WK: Yeah. Every now and then, you get the southwest or Kona wind that going blow the opposite way.

WN: So the work station was the first priority?

WK: Yeah. And then we started on the wall. But didn't get a work station because the board was having hard time in getting permits and easements. At that stage, my wife was the [board] president so she resigned from the presidency because I took the [manager] position. At that time, the board collapsed. Right now, they still yet trying to figure 'em out. They don't know what's going on. They no more control. I don't know, was hard for them and hard for me. Can't communicate with them.

WN: You sort of stuck in the middle, huh?

WK: Yeah. I started in April and the first meeting we had was, I don't know, September. That's the first time I met them. (Chuckles) I knew them, but informally. So, they never even get the money for us. Mr. [Walter] Ritte got all the money for us the first year. So the first year was pretty hard, so when I needed help, I go to Walter. I go to the board and they don't know what's going on. So I got tired of them. They didn't sound like they cared. You know, some board members cut themselves too thin. You know, they put the fish pond way bottom of their list. So if they did that, I didn't go to them. So I was [thinking of] going back to [work at] Kalaupapa. 'Cause, you know, I didn't need this.

WN: This was recently?

WK: Oh, yeah. This was the first year. The board members, they write bylaws, but they never do come meeting. So why the sense get one bylaw?

WN: Actually, it's the board's job to set policy, right, on what's going on?

WK: Oh, I don't know.

WN: I guess your job is to just implement those goals and policies, huh? I don't know.

WK: They set objectives, and goals, and strategic plans. But they never go by 'em. I no can say "never." They never yet went by 'em. They take all that time and money for write one strategic plan which they not going even look at. I told 'em, "I going be here for one year, but after that, you know, I'm not going carry this whole burden by myself. I going do the best I can. I not going do one sloppy job."

So we finished the pond wall. Oh, building the pond wall, my dad, since he was a mason, he helped me out a lot. I used to build the shrines every time for the *makahiki*, but this is one long shrine.

(Laughter)

WK: Shrine maybe big like this table, that's it. But, you know, this wall was too much.

WN: What caused the disrepair of the wall? Was it mostly just time?

WK: The disrepair of the wall? It's the wear and tear. You know, the wear and tear of the ocean. And the fishermen take plenty rocks when they make bullpen. I know when we was bullpen, we come in here, take thirty, forty rocks every time we go out.

WN: Where you folks got the rocks from to repair the wall?

WK: We got 'em from Kamalō Stream and Kawela Stream.

WN: So how long took you guys to repair the wall?

WK: We started in June, finished in December. So six months.

WN: What kind manpower you folks had?

WK: I had four summer kids [i.e., high school students] for about maybe nine weeks. Then just had me and Clarence. Clarence started summertime, too, June 18.

WN: Clarence who?

WK: Kalilikane.

WN: And the summer students, you guys paid 'em or was it volunteer kind?

WK: Was summer youth employment training program, so the county paid 'em. So they all started on the 18th. Then October or November—November, I think, Dickie Tollefsen—Richard Tollefsen—came on board for the *limu.*

WN: How does that *limu* project relate to this . . .

WK: I have no idea. I still yet wondering why. [*Limu* is being raised in and near 'Ualapu'e Fishpond as part of a seaweed stock enhancing program carried out by DBED and a University of Arizona researcher.]

WN: Has nothing to do with you?

WK: You know, *limu* creates oxygen nighttime 'cause they start to spore late. So they grow during the sun, just like all algae. And they store oxygen when they grow. Then nighttime, they release 'em 'cause they releasing their spores, too. So that's good for the fish. But, you know, we [already] get all this aeration. I don't know how the *hui* got involved with the *limu.* Mr. Ritte had one big say in that.

I don't know how the *'o'opu* got involved with the fish pond, but it is. I don't know how the hatchery got involved, but it is. Just Walter's big idea of aquaculture [on] Moloka'i. And think there's one pretty conflict right there. To me, DBED [Department of Business and Economic Development] is economic development. If I going develop something, I better make money. It's not R & D [research and development], it's DBED. They like do R & D on *'o'opu.* And Walter pushed that.

WN: So how do you deal with this, what you feel is a kind of a conflict between economic development and culture?

WK: Well, see, this is one culture aspect 'cause this is one fish pond. I going try see make 'em economic. This right here. So that's not that bad. And the *limu* project, I no can say it's an economic. They came with one study that we can make $20,000 in a year with one acre. But it's never been done yet. So everything is R & D. Nobody's making money. It's a nonprofit organization till I don't know when.

WN: And where do you stand on this issue of culture versus economic development?

WK: Oh, I not going take one stand. One, I going try see make 'em economic. Two, I like the pond stay as is and try see if we can make it economic. The Hawaiians did it couple centuries ago. You know, they used to feed the whole *ahupua'a* when had 10,000 people [living] in it. So if they can do it, I think we can do 'em. With later technology, we going be raising our own *puas.* We can be catching fish and throwing them in here and then raising 'em. We can feed 'em. So I think can work out in economic. You got fifteen acres of pond. Good exchange of water. The *mākāhā* is like million gallons a day exchange. Good wind.

WN: Through the *mākāhā,* million gallons a day exchange of water?

WK: I think so.

WN: Hoo! Man.

WK: It's something like 10,000 gallons per minute.

WN: Is that right?

WK: Per one *mākāhā*. We got three of them.

WN: The three *mākāhā* is the three original *mākāhā*, or you folks had to create?

WK: [Originally] had only two *mākāhā*, I think, on this fish pond. We created the middle one for aeration and for harvest purpose. 'Cause we couldn't use the top [i.e., east] *mākāhā* 'cause the mangrove growth is overgrown over there. It's nothing bad, but down the line human predators might go over there and harvest in that *mākāhā*, you know, nighttime with gas lights and stuff. It's convenient for them. And you cannot see 'em till last minute 'cause the mangroves there. But down in the future, the mangrove, we going to wipe 'em all out so we can harvest in that third *mākāhā*, too. But for now, not yet.

WN: So, for the mangrove, what you guys had to do?

WK: The mangrove, I just *wen*, with the weed eater, throw one blade on top and cut 'em. Cut 'em low, let 'em sit there about a month, then the roots can't hold the silt, so it ran away. Then throw the blade on again, cut 'em again. Keep on cutting 'em until reach sand and till the mangrove deteriorate. 'Cause you can see 'em sometimes. They still yet popping out 'cause they releasing. You know, they cannot hold all the roots, so I got to go over there and cut 'em.

WN: So you almost constantly have to maintain it?

WK: Not constantly. Once a month.

WN: Once a month?

WK: Yeah. They don't grow back, though.

WN: Oh, yeah? They don't grow back?

WK: Once you cut 'em they don't grow back. The seeds, some of 'em I see floating around, I just break it. Salt get in and kills it. Except it deteriorates real slow. And then, it sinks at the bottom, then mud grows on it. And after you know it, still mud. H_2S or hydrogen sulfide.

WN: How long took you folks to clear the mangrove?

WK: It could have taken me like two months. But, you know, we doing [i.e., repairing] the wall and [cutting] the mangrove, wall and the mangrove, so took six months for the whole thing. The wall and the mangrove. We tore the wall down. Took the mangrove out. Move the wall back up again. And the mangroves that growing on the side, we just cut 'em. The ones growing in the wall, we tore that [part of the] wall down and cut 'em, then lift 'em right back

up. Sometimes dig 'em out.

WN: What about the *mākāhā,* what you guys had to do? I know you guys put one walkway over there [i.e., a wooden bridge was built over the *mākāhā*].

WK: Yeah. 'Cause we needed the wheelbarrows go back and forth. So I constructed one *mākāhā,* the bridge, so the wheelbarrows can go back and forth. Then the first time I put the [bridge] on, the fish wouldn't come in [the *mākāhā*]. The *weke* and the *pāpio.* They didn't want to go underneath the shade. Underneath the bridge. So I look at 'em. They come in and they turn around and stay right there. Maybe had like thirty, forty of them.

WN: Was it the shade or was it you standing over there that chased them away, you think?

WK: I think was the bridge. They wouldn't want to go underneath the shade. It's one different environment or different scenery for them. So was kind of . . .

WN: So how you solved that?

WK: I don't know. The fish, they usually come in nighttime now. But I couldn't understand why they wouldn't go in because nighttime it's all dark. I never know they could see the shade part for the—maybe they don't want to go in caves or something, I don't know. They think that's one cave. And that's the *weke* and the *pāpio.* You know, mullet just go right in.

WN: Oh, mullet, they don't—no problem?

WK: No problem then.

WN: That's what you folks going market the most, huh, mullet?

WK: I don't know if mullet or *awa.* I think *awa,* we going market the most 'cause, one, mullet takes two years to mature. *Awa* is six months. So, you know, if you like go economic, I would turn 'em around with *awa*s because you can turn it around much faster.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Another thing that you guys had to do was get rid of the predators, huh? Why don't you talk about that.

WK: Yeah, the predators. We never had nets, so I went around the community borrowing nets from friends and family. We used majority my nets. I cut the pond [into] about 150 feet to 100 feet [sections]. And then, I ordered a small gill net—not gill net, mesh net. Then I borrowed some nets when I was working the shrimp farm. So we *wen* use shrimp nets. And then, we just drag that small shrimp nets. It took us five days for drag the whole pond 'cause we never like miss nothing. We just keep on cutting 'em. After we drag . . .

WN: You mean, you block off portions of the pond?

WK: Right. We drag this side. Then we jump over, then drag the next side. Then grab the net and move 'em, then drag this side, get the net. So we took out *pāpio*, maybe one cooler of them. Two coolers of barracudas. Seventeen Samoan crab.

WN: (Chuckles) You guys must have had feast, huh?

WK: Yeah. I don't know, maybe ten to twenty gallon *'ala'eke* crab.

WN: What's wrong with keeping Samoan crabs in the pond?

WK: Nothing. Nothing wrong with 'em, except they dig holes. They all right, but they going start digging holes and might jam up my wall. [Unless] I can keep 'em in the mangrove, [but] I want to cut the mangrove eventually. So I guess nothing wrong with the Samoan crab.

WN: What about *pāpio?*

WK: *Pāpio*, they're carnivores. They're going to eat the fingerlings, whatever we going try raise down there. They grow big to *ulua*, they going start eating everything.

WN: That's right.

WK: Couple eels. Four eels, to be exact. Jellyfish. We had plenty jellyfish. So.

WN: You got to get rid of jellyfish, huh? (Chuckles)

WK: Too still, the water, so the jellyfish just sits at the bottom. But I think once we get rid of the mangrove, we're going to get rid of the jellyfish problem. So, that wasn't challenging. Was good fun. Was something different 'cause, you know, every day, in and out, is wall, the wall, the wall.

WN: You wanted to see some fish for a change.

WK: Yeah. And everybody wanted to see fish, too. I think I wanted to see the fish the most.

WN: (Chuckles) I bet.

WK: I wanted to get in the water the most.

WN: What about mullet? If you guys caught mullet when you were getting predators, you threw 'em back in?

WK: Yeah. We got a lot of small fingerling mullets. We threw it back in. When I first put on the gates, we caught three mullets in the gates, test it out. You know, the mullet, during low tide, want to come out. So we lift up the front gate. It goes in, we shut 'em. Then we trapped it.

WN: That's how you guys going harvest, huh? Using the *mākāhā?*

WK: Right.

WN: In talking to some old-timers, when Harry Apo had this place, they used a lot of drag net.

WK: Yeah.

WN: You folks not going do that?

WK: It's too much manpower. It might not be feasible. So, you know, I looking at more economic. I going do everything, try a one-man operation. Going try operate 'em [i.e., harvest fish] only on the *mākāhā*s. Drag net, I need three guys, you know. One for push the boat, two for drop the net. You know, one family probably can handle, but not one guy. So I trying---I got hired to do one study on economic.

WN: So the old Hawaiians, they did 'em two ways? They did drag net and catching through the *mākāhā?*

WK: They did only the *mākāhā*s. And every now and then, they flush the pond with the net. But I think they only caught 'em with the *mākāhā*s. That's why, they had two gates.

WN: You guys going use all three *mākāhā* for harvest?

WK: We only going use two for now. Maybe next year sometime we gonna construct the third *mākāhā* for harvest. But right now, it's only one gate standing. So only using two *mākāhā*s, the first two.

WN: And the third one is going be just for . . .

WK: Aeration. Yeah. We need the wind for come push 'em from east to west and circulate the bottom. We going try see if we can bring out the silt and make 'em come out the last *mākāhā* on the west side.

WN: Scientifically, what about like the salinity of the water. You know, you going to be monitoring that?

WK: No. The salinity of the water, this is ocean, so it hardly ever change. It's going to change when get the low tide. You know, the low tide, I tested it. The lowest one to fifteen; the highest it went up to is thirty-two. So, yeah, we going be testing 'em. We not going be worrying about too much DO and pH until we start feeding 'em or we start density.

WN: What about like after big rains and stuff? That's not going to put more fresh water inside the pond or anything like that?

WK: Going. But that ain't going to harm 'cause the mullet likes fresh water. That's why all the fingerlings and the mullet in the schools, they usually around fresh water or by streams. So the fresh water cures them if they got algae on their gills or if they sick. So that would help them, in fact. During winter months, they usually spawn, so they usually travel or migrate. So when it rains a lot, they might want to migrate [to the open ocean]. That's when we can

harvest them in the *mākāhās*. And the opposite with the *awa*. In the summer months they migrate. So we got eight months covered. That's why we picked up the *limu* project for cover the other four months.

WN: So *awa* and mullet, they complement each other pretty well, then, 'cause they have different . . .

WK: Migrating season. So that's why we went with mullet and *awa*.

WN: So how often you folks going harvest?

WK: Once a week once we got 'em stocked and when they migrate. If good harvest, like 500 pounds or 2,000 pounds a week would be good.

WN: Fingerlings, you folks going to stock?

WK: Yeah.

WN: And where you folks going to hatch 'em?

WK: We're going to try see if we can get some from Oceanic Institute. We going catch some. And then raise 'em in the tanks till certain size, that . . .

WN: These tanks right here?

WK: . . . yeah . . . that we know that they can't go through the gates. And then let 'em go. And some, we're going to catch pretty big size. We raise 'em only little bit. Some, if we catch 'em smaller, the longer we have to raise. So it's better to catch 'em bigger, so . . .

WN: How long would a fingerling take to grow big enough so that it cannot get out through the gate?

WK: Oh, four to six months.

WN: For real?

WK: If it's a fingerling.

WN: So, before that, you cannot put 'em in the pond or else they going come right out.

WK: Right. So I want to catch 'em to about two to three months old already so I can keep 'em only two, three months (chuckles). Or ask Oceanic Institute to send bigger fingerlings. I no like the fry, I no like the fingerlings. Maybe little bit bigger.

WN: The old way was that the fingerlings would come in from the open ocean and then they would stay here because of the nutrients and the algae in the pond so that they wouldn't want to leave? Was that the theory?

WK: No, majority all the Hawaiian fish ponds, they had fish ponds for certain species. Like this fish pond was actually good for mullet 'cause we get one *pūnāwai*. You know, we get plenty fresh water, and the fish like that, like I said. If you like find all the *puas* and the fingerlings, the *awas*, you go to the streams. Kamalō Stream, Kawela, Mānila Camp. That's all you going see. Got plenty fresh water. So this pond used to have plenty fresh water. You know, had a taro patch all over here, running in here. And big spring over there running in. Seven acres of taro patch used to run in. Hey, if I was one fish, I would like to live here. You know, eating all the algae from the taro coming down. But [today] we no more the taro patch. We no more that fresh water. How we going try see if can bring 'em in? And how will I keep 'em?

WN: The old-timers told me had one spring in the middle of the pond. Have you folks seen that or felt that?

WK: We felt 'em over there. Actually, that's not the middle of the pond. Well, it's about the middle of the pond over there. It's real cold. But I didn't find it. I just felt 'em like, oh, . . .

WN: Felt cold water over there?

WK: . . . cold! When we dragging net. So I know there's plenty fresh water coming in here. So that's good.

WN: So if there's ever a drought or anything on East End, it would affect this aquaculture industry, yeah?

WK: Yeah. East End, unusual to have one drought. The mountains too close. Not like town [i.e., Kaunakakai]. Town, it's too damn hot. Over here, the mountains right here, so it usually rains every morning. Even during summer months, usually rain in the morning and rain at night. But during the day is nice.

WN: In terms of marketing for the fish pond, how do you envision it, in terms of who's going to be the consumers of the fish raised in this pond?

WK: I going ask my dad's help. How I envision marketing is to start off small. Start off with Moloka'i. If I get enough fish for the island, then I can move on, O'ahu or Maui. In the future, we're all looking for the Japanese market [and the] Mainland. But I look at it, cover your roots first, and then grow. You know, I cannot start growing right away, find out that, ey, it's expensive flying my fish way over there. So I like the board realize that we got to have to start small first, and then move up. Not all let's get 10,000 pounds of *ogo* and ship 'em to Japan and we going make certain certain [amount]. We don't know. We don't know how much cost for get there until we do 'em. And you no like trial and error on that. If you can sell 'em right down the street, which going just get you manpower or just gas money for go down there, instead this freight and packing them, and getting boxes and plastic bags, and brining them. The less work, it's better. So if I can start from locally first. If I got enough plenty fish inside the pond for expand, I going to O'ahu or Maui, then expand from there. We got enough, then can go different islands. If get more fish ponds that we can cover all the different grounds, then maybe look at Mainland markets or foreign-country markets. But I have to cover from the beginning first, Moloka'i.

WN: But, you know, Moloka'i people, they can go fishing, so are they used to buying fish? I'm talking about the Moloka'i people, you know, not the tourists.

WK: Yeah. Mullet can go. Mullet, majority Hawaiians going buy 'em. Hawaiians love mullet. They love *manini*. I can get rid of 'em at the Midnite Inn, $3.50 a pound.

WN: *Manini* or mullet?

WK: The mullet. And that's pretty good. You know, if you get two, three hundred pounds, $3.50 a pound, that's pretty good.

WN: So the mullet we eat at Midnite Inn is all fresh from Moloka'i?

WK: All fresh from Moloka'i. Last year I caught majority of all the mullet [served at] Midnite Inn. I sell 'em to them $3.50 a pound. And when I go over there and eat, it's seven dollars a plate.

(Laughter)

WN: You gotta pay?

WK: And it's half [a fish]. So they make fourteen dollars. Fourteen dollars . . .

WN: Per fish.

WK: . . . per fish. So. But I guess I had to get rid of 'em.

WN: And they got to rid of 'em, too. They got to sell 'em, too.

WK: Yeah, they got to sell 'em. And seven dollars a [plate], cooked and prepared. That's one good price.

WN: You know, fish is hard because got to be fresh, right? And so you only got a matter of days before the supplier and the retailer got to get rid of the fish, right? Unless there's other—are there plans for like *bagoong*, for example, for the Filipinos? Things like that?

WK: Actually, the fishermen like get rid of 'em the first day. 'Cause one, they can sell 'em to their price. You know, fresh fish. The next day, $3.50 a pound, I no sell 'em all, I got to drop 'em all the way down to half that price. 'Cause nobody not going like buy fresh fish. You know, I going have to drop 'em down to $1.75 a pound 'cause it's not fresh fish. And it's not cool to sell—it's not fresh fish and you trying to sell 'em [as] fresh fish. You know, you have to try accomplish quality fish first to get known that, oh, Kalipi's fish pond got good fish. You know, he got quality fish. Once you get one bad name in so-and-so, when you try to grow, it's hard. So what you try to get first is quality fish. You don't want your fish to get all bruised up, bust up, scratch up, the scales missing. Going come slimy fast. Not brined good. So you got to look at first, it's quality fish, and then start small. And then Midnite Inn probably get dealing with different markets. And they can tell, oh, so-and-so got good fish. If they like get reference or something. So, you know, if you going get day-old fish, you better

sell 'em cheap. Unless next time you come around, nobody going like buy 'em from you. So what goes around comes around.

WN: They also talking about making this fish pond an educational thing for young people. How do you envision that to take place?

WK: Oh, I was going catch all the different kind species of fish inside the pond. Go get formaldehyde and put 'em in bottles and stuff. Tell 'em about the culture. Tell 'em about little bit technical stuff that I learned. The Hawaiian rights and the *ahupua'a.* So I envision that pretty good. I like that happen. 'Cause I had to---I *wen* learn from all the different fishermen. Now, they [younger generations] lucky. All they have to do is come to me. I *wen* learn from my dad, Jack, Eddie, you know, plenty different fishermen. John Shoemaker. Then I *wen* learn technical [aspects] from the shrimp farm, Oceanic Institute. Then here, working and learning at the same time. So, they luck out. You know, took me years to learn all this stuff. They just going come to one training course or one education phase. I think it's going be successful inside for that purpose.

WN: This area will also be the educational area?

WK: Right.

WN: People to come and learn and . . .

WK: Education in pond building, in setting up the gates, or how much feed you have to feed the fish. Or what the temperature of the water. What the thing should be or what it shouldn't be. All that kind small stuff.

WN: When you say "education," you mean for future fishermen or you talking about for people to learn more about the culture of fish ponds and management?

WK: Both. Future fishermen who like start up their ponds, and culture aspect in knowing what these ponds meant to the Hawaiians back then and what it means to us now. What is the different status. It meant [a lot] to them 'cause that was their bread and butter. This is their icebox. They not going catch 10,000 pounds of fish and ship 'em. They never had a icebox. So they going catch what they need to eat. So I going catch what I need to sell. I not going catch more than I need to. ***Bumbai,*** if I catch more, I have to sell 'em cheap. So, you like keep one status that Midnite Inn only can handle 200 pounds one week. If I not going get another market, I only going harvest 200 pounds a week. I not going harvest 300 pounds and Midnite Inn going say, "Oh, I going pay you $2.50 a pound." So, supply and demand plays a big role in that and how the Hawaiians think.

WN: Take only what you need.

WK: Yeah. They take only what they eat and we only going try see if we take what we can sell. If we no more the market for 'em, I ain't going to take 'em. I don't want to sell the fish dollar a pound and bring the price down unless I got million pounds or something like that. But other than that, no. 'Cause I going be jamming up all the small fishermen. And I was one of them.

(Laughter)

WK: And I got pissed off when they dropped the *ʻūʻū*. So I didn't like that.

WN: You plan to stay in fresh fish?

WK: Fresh fish.

WN: Nobody's talking about someday getting big enough so that there's a market for like dried fish or canned fish or something like that?

WK: Well, [with] *awa*, they make fish cakes. So eventually, we can get different ponds with different fish. 'Cause how the landmark is by, you know, probably no more one stream or one *pūnāwai*. Like you go more East End, it's plenty big reefs where *enenue* or *kala* can raise there. So you can dry them. But here, you know, it's ideal for mullet 'cause of the fresh water. Different ponds is different species of fish.

WN: Are there other ways to eat mullet besides fresh?

WK: You can have 'em raw. Gee, I never did eat dry mullet. You can half dry 'em and cook 'em.

WN: But not as good, though. (Chuckles)

WK: Not as good. Mullet is soft. If you get plenty, you can use 'em for bait. But you don't want to use mullet for bait fish. I don't think the fishermen going buy $3.50 a pound for bait fish when they can go catch 'em. And if they do, they not going buy 100 pounds.

WN: Are there plans for agriculture around here? Revive taro?

WK: Yeah. Like this, right here [adjacent to ʻUalapuʻe Fishpond], we going try get taro in here and raise our fingerlings. Trial and error the fingerlings. If they like this water. You know, it's pure fresh water, but they're going to dredge so little bit salt water can get in. So we got to get saltwater taro.

WN: That's for commercial, too?

WK: On the taro?

WN: Yeah.

WK: I don't think so. I think it's more of a show. Commercial, I would take seven acres up there. You know, you get 'em so the nutrients of the taro come down in the pond. And you know you going get how the Hawaiians had 'em. The fingerlings going like stay in here. The mullet like go come over here.

WN: So are there plans to develop that for taro?

WK: Now, I have no idea. I don't think so. I saw 'em in the strategic plan, but.

WN: Well, that's interesting when you think of taro patches benefitting the fish pond like you were talking about.

WK: Yeah. Well, I never thought about 'em until last year, why the taro patch is by the fish pond, you know. Or why the fish like streams. So, I had to ask myself. Why the fish over here? That's why I got to catch 'em over there. I know where the fish stay, but I no ask myself why the fish stay. And then, now, I ask myself that kind questions and I find out, oh, well, *pūnāwai* right here. Plenty fresh water. I go catch my mullet down Keawa Nui and Kawela. Why got plenty mullet over there? Get plenty freshwater springs. I guess they like freshwater springs. So if I can get the freshwater springs, like Keawa Nui and Kawela, 'Ualapu'e can be the same thing, plenty mullet.

WN: Are there plans to do other fish ponds around here?

WK: Yeah. We going try see if we can start Halemahana [Fishpond] in the next year or so.

WN: Is that state-owned or . . .

WK: State-owned. Just bringing 'em back is good enough for me. You know, you get a culture aspect. At least get your identity back in your Hawaiian culture. But you got to make ends meet. So that's the hard part. 'Cause, you know, we never live that style. We trying to bring 'em back, but a fish pond is not only the ocean. You got to work with the land around that fish pond. You got to bring back the *pūnāwais* and the taro patches. So I found out that, you know, I work in here, but it's the whole thing that going to make this successful. So it's pretty interesting. Pretty much of a challenge. You never get bored. You get frustrated but never bored.

WN: Well, I going turn off the tape recorder. You got anything else you want to say?

WK: No, that's about it.

WN: That's it? Okay, thank you.

WK: Okay, Warren.

END OF INTERVIEW

'UALAPU'E, MOLOKA'I

Oral Histories from the East End

Volume I

Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

June 1991